

the threat of identity theft by private criminals and abuse of their liberties by public criminals, while diverting valuable law enforcement resources away from addressing real threats to public safety. In addition, national identifiers are incompatible with a limited, constitutional government. I, therefore, hope my colleagues will join my efforts to protect the freedom of their constituents by supporting the Identity Theft Prevention Act.

INTRODUCTION OF AN AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION PROVIDING THAT FOREIGN-BORN CITIZENS OF 20 YEARS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR THE OFFICE OF PRESIDENT

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 4, 2005

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing a proposed amendment to the Constitution of the United States that will enable all citizens of this country to be eligible to hold the Office of President. No citizen should be denied the opportunity to seek the Nation's highest office. The proposal that I am introducing will allow foreign-born individuals who have been citizens of this country for at least 20 years to be eligible for this office.

As you know, Article II of the Constitution of the United States provides that only natural-born citizens are entitled to hold the Office of President. I believe that this limitation contradicts the principles for which this country stands. This Nation prides itself on its diversity of culture, experience, and opinion. This quality is achieved only by welcoming immigrants to this country, allowing them to become citizens, and enabling them make full contributions to society.

For the most part, the United States treats its citizens, those natural-born and foreign-born, the same. However, when determining who is eligible for the Offices of President, this country unfairly distinguishes between the two. Allowing the United States to be a better country because of the contributions that foreign-born citizens make, and then not allowing them to fully participate in all aspects of society, is un-American.

As you may also know, some of our country's foreign-born citizens are our country's greatest public servants. There are also 700 foreign-born citizens who have received the Medal of Honor. It is unjust to deny citizens that have risked their lives for this country the chance to become President of the United States as well. A 2002 Pentagon study reports that more than 30,000 foreign-born citizens are currently serving in the U.S. military.

I realize that constitutional amendments are rare and that those proposed should be subject to great scrutiny. I truly respect one of the documents on which our country was founded, the Constitution of the United States. Therefore, it is after great consideration and with the utmost gravity, that I introduce this proposal today. I am hopeful that my fellow colleagues in Congress will properly consider the proposed amendment and realize that every citizen of the United States should be entitled to dream of becoming President.

HONORING THE LIFE OF PATRICIA RITTER

HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 4, 2005

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Patricia Ritter, who passed away on December 10, 2004. Mrs. Ritter was one of Connecticut's most influential civil rights leaders and she leaves a legacy that will not soon be forgotten. Her passion for social justice was only matched by her passion for her family. She leaves behind her husband and five children, two of whom served in the Connecticut General Assembly. While I served as State Senate President Pro Tempore I had the privilege of working with her son Tom, who served as Speaker of the House. My deepest condolences go out to Tom and his family during this time.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in remembering and honoring the life of Patricia Ritter. I would also like to submit for the RECORD this editorial from the Hartford Courant which captures the essence of what made Mrs. Ritter such a special person.

[From the Hartford Courant, Dec. 14, 2004]

THE REMARKABLE PAT RITTER

She stood for something. She acted on her beliefs. She changed things.

Patricia Ritter, who died last week at the age of 84, was an activist, civil rights pioneer, internationalist and teacher as well as the wife and mother of three state legislators.

A woman of grace, good cheer and quiet intensity, Mrs. Ritter was exposed to, and appalled by, a segregated restaurant when she was a 16-year-old freshman at the University of Iowa. She organized a protest and then headed South with the first of the Freedom Riders—traveling in the odious "Colored Only" train cars, and refusing to move.

After marrying and moving to Connecticut, she was named to the state's Commission on Human Rights in 1950, the first woman so honored. Facing the problem of segregated housing, she and her husband George co-founded the Connecticut Housing Investment Fund, Inc. in 1968 to finance integrated and affordable housing and neighborhood revitalization projects throughout Connecticut.

This allowed racial minorities to buy homes in the suburbs, which sometimes brought threats of violence and, on at least one occasion, actual violence to Mrs. Ritter.

To date, CHIF has provided more than \$108 million to help individuals and organizations purchase, rehabilitate or build homes for low- and moderate-income families.

The wall between city and suburb was not the only one she helped tear down. After China opened its doors to the West in the 1970s, Mrs. Ritter founded China in Connecticut, one of the first educational links between this country and China.

A college teacher, she spent a decade teaching English at Chinese universities, and sponsored many of her Chinese students to study at U.S. colleges. Several of Mrs. Ritter's children followed her example and taught in China as well. The results of such work are incalculable. Mrs. Ritter's five children carried on her beliefs; as artists, writers, teachers, businessmen and legislators. Her husband and sons Thomas and John served in the General Assembly; Thomas was speaker of the House for three terms.

"Her integrity, her character, her work, her children—she was just a marvelous per-

son," said Judge Robert Satter, a longtime family friend. Mrs. Ritter's life affirms the proposition that, yes, one person can make a difference.

CONGRATULATIONS TO NOLAN CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL, STATE FOOTBALL CHAMPIONS

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 4, 2005

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the superior performance of the Nolan Catholic High School football team, The Vikings, on their State Championship for Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools Division 1 6A.

The Vikings shut out Houston St. Pius X high school for the championship with a 14–0 score at Floyd Casey Stadium, Baylor University, in Waco, TX, on Saturday November 27, 2004. The championship victory marked the 8th time this season the Vikings shut out their opponent. This is the first trip to the state final in nine years for the Vikings, who have never won a State crown.

I extend my sincere congratulations to Brother Richard Thompson, S.M., principal of Nolan Catholic High School, the coaches and especially to the team for their talent and dedication to excellence.

VERMONT FOODBANK FIGHTS HUNGER

HON. BERNARD SANDERS

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 4, 2005

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, even though this is the richest and most productive nation in the history of the world, hunger is still a major problem in the United States. In my State of Vermont alone, 55,000 households are living in poverty. In Vermont, many of these people find that the existence of food shelves provides the final protection to keep them from sinking into malnutrition and even starvation. Of those who go to food shelves, almost one out of four is elderly and over half are families with children. Most of these are working families. It is a terrible fact that 21,000 children under the age of 12 either go hungry or are at risk of hunger in Vermont. The situation is so severe that nationwide, over 29 percent of households that received emergency food last year literally had to choose between paying for food or paying for medical care.

Clearly our Nation's governmental policies are entirely wrong, placing as they do tax breaks for the wealthy and corporate welfare as high priorities, and ignoring the need to feed the hungry, guarantee health care to all, support the construction of affordable housing, and make college available to those who wish to attend. We need to change our skewed priorities which, rather than making life better and more secure for the vast majority of Americans, lead to the increasing gap between rich and poor, and to ever-increasing economic pressures faced by the middle class.

But while we struggle to change the United States, to make it into a more just and equitable society, we also need to make sure that no American goes hungry.

I want to commend, today, the Vermont Foodbank for its years of exemplary service to fighting hunger. The Vermont Foodbank serves food shelves, community kitchens, homeless shelters, domestic abuse programs and programs which provide services for the elderly and children. Well over 100,000 people are served through Foodbank's network of 295 agencies each year. From its building in Barre, the Foodbank supplies agencies and NGOs all over Vermont with food for those who are hungry. It is greatly assisted in its work by hundreds of volunteers, who contributed over 23,000 hours—over 11 years of work weeks—in just the past year alone.

The Vermont Foodbank helps assure that none among us go hungry, that every community group and agency that seeks to combat hunger has a resource upon which it can call. It, together with our many community food banks, the Vermont Campaign to End Childhood Hunger, the work of shelters, the Salvation Army, churches, and countless other groups, is doing essential, life-sustaining work in throughout our State.

INTRODUCING THE SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFICIARY TAX REDUCTION ACT AND THE SENIOR CITIZENS' TAX ELIMINATION ACT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 4, 2005

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to introduce two pieces of legislation to reduce taxes on senior citizens. The first bill, the Social Security Beneficiary Tax Reduction Act, repeals the 1993 tax increase on Social Security benefits. Repealing this increase on Social Security benefits is a good first step toward reducing the burden imposed by the federal government on senior citizens. However, imposing any tax on Social Security benefits is unfair and illogical. This is why I am also introducing the Senior Citizens' Tax Elimination Act, which repeals all taxes on Social Security benefits.

Since Social Security benefits are financed with tax dollars, taxing these benefits is yet another example of double taxation. Furthermore, "taxing" benefits paid by the government is merely an accounting trick, a shell game which allows members of Congress to reduce benefits by subterfuge. This allows Congress to continue using the Social Security trust fund as a means of financing other government programs, and masks the true size of the federal deficit.

Instead of imposing ridiculous taxes on senior citizens, Congress should ensure the integrity of the Social Security trust fund by ending the practice of using trust fund monies for other programs. In order to accomplish this goal I introduced the Social Security Preservation Act (H.R. 219), which ensures that all money in the Social Security trust fund is spent solely on Social Security. At a time when Congress' inability to control spending is once again threatening the Social Security trust fund, the need for this legislation has never been greater. When the government

taxes Americans to fund Social Security, it promises the American people that the money will be there for them when they retire. Congress has a moral obligation to keep that promise.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to help free senior citizens from oppressive taxation by supporting my Senior Citizens' Tax Elimination Act and my Social Security Beneficiary Tax Reduction Act. I also urge my colleagues to ensure that moneys from the Social Security trust fund are used solely for Social Security benefits and not wasted on frivolous government programs.

REINTRODUCTION OF H.R. 40, COMMISSION TO STUDY REPARATIONS PROPOSALS FOR AFRICAN-AMERICANS ACT

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 4, 2005

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to re-introduce H.R. 40, the Commission to Study Reparation Proposals for African-Americans Act, along with 22 original cosponsors. Since I first introduced H.R. 40 in 1989, we have made substantial progress in elevating this issue in the national consciousness. Through legislation, state and local resolutions, and litigation, we are moving closer to a full dialogue on the role of slavery in building this country.

Across the nation, three state legislatures: Louisiana, California and Florida, have passed resolutions supporting H.R. 40. Another three states: New Jersey, New York and Texas, have legislation pending. At the local level, the legislation has gained similar support, with 12 major cities having passed similar supporting resolutions.

However, despite this progress, the legacy of slavery lingers heavily in this nation. While we have focused on the social effects of slavery and segregation, its continuing economic implications have been largely ignored by mainstream analysis. These economic issues are the root cause of many critical issues in the African-American community today, such as education, healthcare, and crime. The call for reparations represents a commitment to entering a constructive dialogue on the role of slavery and racism in shaping present-day conditions in our community and American society.

H.R. 40 is designed to create a formal dialogue on the issue of reparations through the establishment of a national commission to examine the institution of slavery. The commission will study the impact of slavery and continuing discrimination against African-Americans, resulting directly and indirectly from slavery, during the apartheid of reconstruction, desegregation, and the present day. The commission would also make recommendations concerning any form of apology and compensation to begin the long delayed process of atonement.

The issue of reparations remains sensitive in many communities because of the basic question of money. Statements dismissing reparations on the grounds of payment issues, however, are completely premature, especially when we have not yet had a national dialogue

or study of the area. Economists have told us that the value of slave labor to the American economy and potential damages are greater than \$7 trillion. Such a staggering sum indicates that the discussion of reparations must be about something other than money.

However, I must stress that the reparations issue is not about a check to individuals. The call for reparations represents a commitment to entering a constructive dialogue on the role of slavery and racism in shaping American society. Everyone profited from the labor of the slaves, even later immigrants, because slave labor and the taxes from those enterprises built the infrastructure of this nation. The debt we talk about is not centuries old, but dates back only a few decades and is within our lifetimes because of Jim Crow.

This nation must make a commitment to understanding how the legacy of slavery and its vestiges contribute to present day societal and economic inequality. That is why I re-introduce H.R. 40 at the opening of every Congress and sponsor a forum on reparations during every Congressional Black Caucus legislative conference. We must be diligent in our efforts to educate this nation about its history. I hope that in this 109th Congress, we can schedule formal hearings on this legislation to begin the process of having our nation finally acknowledge its debt.

DENTON RANKS 1ST AMONG MOST-TECHNOLOGY-ADVANCED CITIES

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 4, 2005

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, it is my great honor to recognize Denton, Texas for being acknowledged as the No. 1 most technology-advanced city with a population of 75,000 to 124,999, by the Center for Digital Government. The ranking was based on the 2004 Digital Cities Survey that examines how city governments are using digital technology to become more efficient and communicate with residents.

The survey and ranking determined by the Center asked more than 600 mayors, managers and chief information officers to participate asking 24 questions focusing on implementation, adoption of online service delivery, planning and governance, and the network that allows cities to make the move to digital government.

A life-long resident of Denton County, I offer my congratulations to the city of Denton and to Mayor Euline Brock.

COMPANY THAT DOES IT RIGHT

HON. BERNARD SANDERS

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 4, 2005

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, I want to bring to your attention a remarkable company, located in my home state of Vermont, that can and should serve as a model for corporate responsibility in this era so unfortunately marked by greed of CEO's, who last year paid themselves 301 times as much as the average worker in their companies.